



Governor Ruth Ann Minner



January 27, 2005

To Members of the 143rd General Assembly and to all Delawareans:

In compliance with 29 Del. C. Section 6335(a), I respectfully submit for your consideration the Fiscal Year 2006 Governor's Policy Overview and Budget for the State of Delaware. The proposed Fiscal Year 2006 operating budget totals \$2,744.2 million. This budget continues the tradition of conservative, balanced fiscal stewardship that has served Delaware well in the past, but especially over the last several years. In addition, this budget furthers the priorities of my administration by investing in areas that will make a real difference in the futures of all Delawareans.

The economic forecast for Delaware and states throughout the country has stabilized and seen some improvement. However, states continue to feel pressure to fund responsible budgets as the bills for making short-sighted financial decisions in past years are now coming due. In Delaware the General Assembly and I have built responsible budgets that have kept our state finances solid. This was confirmed by our recent reaffirmation of our triple-A bond ratings. That is not to say that expenditure pressures are non-existent. Indeed, in areas such as health care, energy, and employee benefits, growth is projected to be significant. We have met these challenges in the past by aggressively reengineering state government, by using innovative management techniques to control spiraling health care costs, and by ensuring that the state's financial plan is sustainable. For Fiscal Year 2006, we will continue to make tough choices to exercise fiscal restraint as the economic recovery takes hold in Delaware.

This budget continues to invest additional resources to achieve the policy goals of the Minner-Carney administration. Investing in our goal of implementing full day kindergarten by 2008 as well as placing math specialists in middle schools will help better prepare children for academics and for life. Supporting the additional state police troopers proposed in this budget will help increase homeland security efforts throughout the state. Providing initial operating funding to support the opening of a state veterans home will ensure that this much needed facility will open on schedule.

The Fiscal Year 2006 Recommended Budget makes significant strides in achieving our mutual goals of improving our schools; protecting the environment and making Delaware more livable; making families healthy, safe and self-sufficient; attracting and retaining quality jobs; and managing state government well.

Sincerely,

Ruth Ann Minner
Governor